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Ex-city development aide on Spire crew

BUILDING | Harmening addition indicates new projects planned

November 1, 2007

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The developer of the 150-story Chicago Spire said Wednesday he hired an aide to Mayor Daley to scout the city for development opportunities.

Joining the team led by Spire developer Garrett Kelleher is Joseph Harmening, who monitored large-scale projects for the mayor's office. Harmening worked for the city for about a decade, most recently as first deputy commissioner in the General Services Department.

The hiring and Harmening's job description indicate Kelleher's ambitions in Chicago are spreading. Kelleher, executive chairman of Shelbourne Development Group Inc., has no experience with high-rise development, and many question whether he can finance the potentially \$2 billion Spire.

Kelleher said in a press release that Harmening, 44, "will play a vital role in expanding our local presence." His title is director of development.

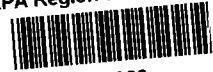
A spokeswoman for Kelleher added that Harmening might be involved with the Spire, but not on any issues dealing with the city. Ethics rules forbid former officials from lobbying the city for a year after their employment ends.

The building, designed by Santiago Calatrava, is slated for 400 N. Lake Shore Dr. At 2,000 feet, it would contend for the "world's tallest" title, but might have to settle for the honor of tallest in the United States. Early caisson work has begun, and Kelleher has said he wants to launch sales in January.

The spokeswoman said Shelbourne's Chicago office has a staff of 14. She said Harmening will lead the office with Peter Smolenski, who joined Shelbourne in 2006 from Capmark Finance.

At City Hall, Harmening managed capital, operations and development programs. In the late 1990s, he helped Daley popularize a "business express" service, a one-stop shop designed to cut the red tape on licensing and other issues.

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